

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-33. (Canceled)

34. (New) A method for quantitating viable cells in a sample, comprising providing a sample containing said cells, contacting said cells with molecule or dye that is detectably altered by enzymatic activity of a viable cell, detecting a total amount of enzymatically altered molecule or dye, and correlating said total amount with a standard value, thereby quantitating viable cells in said sample.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein said cells are bacteria.

36. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein said cells are yeast.

37. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the enzymatic activity is esterase activity.

38. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein said enzymatically altered dye or molecule comprises fluorescein diacetate or OREGON GREEN™.

39. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein detection is performed by a fluorometer.

40. (New) A kit for quantifying viable yeast or bacteria, comprising a cell suspension solution, a cell penetrating dye, wherein said dye is enzymatically and detectably

altered following penetration of viable cells, and instructions for detecting enzymatically altered dye.